

And so, Mr. Chairman, what we want this body and our colleagues to recognize is that HIV and AIDS is a pandemic for people of color, around the world, including here in the United States. Achieving adequate prevention and treatment of HIV and AIDS in Africa and other parts of the world, is not that much different from combating it here. The social, economic, and health care infrastructure deficiencies are pretty much the same. And that is a real shame.

So, I am asking this body, to support Congresswoman LEE's efforts, to support the CBC initiative and to fully fund it this year and for several years to come as needed.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 13, 2000

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Speaker, it was my intention to vote "yea" on rollcall vote No. 324, the H. Amdt. 905 to HR 4690, offered by Representative John Hostetler, but was recorded as voting "nay." The amendment was designed to add a new section, which provides that no funds in the bill may be used to enforce, implement, or administer the provisions of the settlement document dated March 17, 2000, between Smith and Wesson and the Department of the Treasury.

The Second Amendment to the United States Constitution clearly defines the right of Americans to possess firearms. The Second Amendment reads: "A well-regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed." I firmly believe this provision prohibits the federal government from denying citizens this right.

The agreement reached by the Administration and Smith & Wesson should not be used to coerce other manufacturers into abiding by an agreement of which they are not a party. On June 21, 2000, I voted to limit the repercussions of this Smith & Wesson agreement by supporting two of Representative Hostetler's amendments to the VA-HLD Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year (FY) 2001. It is my intention to vote in favor of similar amendments to future FY 2001 Appropriations bills.

INTRODUCTION OF THE RAIL RETIREMENT REFORM

HON. BUD SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 13, 2000

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, I am very pleased to introduce today H.R. 4844, the Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act of 2000, on behalf of myself, the Ranking Member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Mr. OBERSTAR; the Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, Mr. ARCHER; the Ranking Member of the Committee on Ways and Means, Mr. RANGEL; the Chairman of the Ground Transportation Subcommittee, Mr. PETRI; the Ranking Member of the Ground

Transportation Subcommittee, Mr. RAHALL; the Chairman of the Social Security Subcommittee, Mr. SHAW; and the Ranking Member of the Social Security Subcommittee, Mr. MATSUI.

This is a good bill which deserves the support of the House. The following is a joint statement on behalf of the eight original sponsors.

JOINT STATEMENT OF THE EIGHT ORIGINAL SPONSORS OF THE RAILROAD RETIREMENT AND SURVIVORS' IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2000

We are pleased to join together to introduce the Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act of 2000. This legislation will make important improvements in the railroad retirement program.

The introduction of this legislation by the bipartisan leadership of the two House committees with jurisdiction over this program represents a significant step toward enactment. We are pleased that Congress continues to have the close working relationship with railroad management and labor groups that has allowed us to come together on this bill today.

This reform legislation makes several improvements in the current benefit structure, especially for widows and widowers. In addition, the legislation modernizes the system's investment practices and strengthens the financing of the program.

This legislation is the product of several years of complex negotiations between rail management and rail labor. These negotiations were also given impetus by the September 1998 hearing held by the Subcommittee on Ground Transportation on benefit reform legislation authored by our colleague JACK QUINN. Although not all representatives of rail labor could support the final compromise signed in January of this year, a significant majority have endorsed the agreement, as have the groups representing rail retirees. We hope that as this bill moves through the legislative process, the full value of the benefits it brings to the system will be carefully assessed, and that it will ultimately receive the support of all groups.

The Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act of 2000 is the end product of a bipartisan collaborative process. It is a bill that each of us supports and is committed to bring to enactment during the remaining days of the 106th Congress. We are pleased to introduce it today.

RECOGNIZING STEPHEN WEISS, JR.

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 13, 2000

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Stephen Weiss, Jr., a man who has been very instrumental in assisting hundreds of Brooklyn residents in the transition from apartment renters to first time homeowners.

Mr. Weiss, a graduate of Yale University, is an executive with Flintlock Construction Services, LLC, as well as with several other property development companies. Mr. Weiss is also actively involved in the operations of a property management company. Mr. Weiss joined these various firms in 1980, with the goal of using his positions with them to develop and construct primarily affordable housing, both for rental and for sale. Mr. Weiss also used these enterprises to develop much-

needed medical centers, to further benefit the community.

With his partner, DeCosta Headley, Mr. Weiss has developed and built hundreds of affordable apartments in East New York, Brownsville and Bedford Stuyvesant. Many of these homes, built to house working people, were rebuilt out of abandoned shells that used to blight these neighborhoods.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and all of my colleagues to join me in recognizing the lifelong efforts of Stephen Weiss, Jr., and wish him continued success in his future endeavors.

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER DOUG FEARS, USCG

HON. SONNY CALLAHAN

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 13, 2000

Mr. CALLAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Lieutenant Commander Doug Fears, who recently left his position as the United States Coast Guard's (USCG) House liaison officer to attend the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island.

Lieutenant Commander Doug Fears grew up on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. He enlisted in the USCG in 1982 and served on the Cutter *Taney* (WHEC 37) home ported in Portsmouth, Virginia, and in the precommissioning detail for the Cutter *Tampa* (WMEC 902) in Norfolk, Virginia. He attended the USCG's Electronics Technician "A" school on Governor's Island, New York, and the Navy's Broadened Opportunity for Officer Selection and Training (BOOST) Program in San Diego, California, before accepting an appointment to the USCG Academy in 1985.

While at the academy, Lieutenant Commander Fears was active in a number of programs and served as the regimental commander of the Corps of Cadets. He graduated from the academy in May 1989 and subsequently served as Operations Officer and Navigator on the Cutter *Basswood* (WLB 388) in Guam, Marianas Islands.

He was then selected for the USCG/Navy officer exchange program in 1991. He served on the Aegis cruiser, U.S.S. *Vincennes* (CG49), as the Aegis Fire Control Officer. He subsequently served on the Throat Upgrade cruiser U.S.S. *Leahy* (CG 16) as the Combat Information Center Officer. Both ships were home ported in San Diego, California. During his tours, he deployed in support of Operations Desert Storm/Southern Watch in the Northern Arabian (Persian) Gulf, Restore Hope in the Indian Ocean off Somalia, Blue Line in the Eastern Pacific off South America and various bi-lateral exercises in the Sea of Japan and South China Sea.

In July 1993, Lieutenant Commander Fears reported to Seattle, Washington, as a search and rescue controller and command duty officer in the Thirteenth District Command Center. From 1994 to 1996, he served as aide and executive assistant to the Thirteenth District Commander, Rear Admiral John Lockwood.

In June 1996, Lieutenant Commander Fears assumed command of the Cutter *Sitkinak* (WP 1329), home ported in Key West, Florida. During his tour, he was involved in numerous counter-narcotics, alien migrant interdiction and search and rescue operations, including